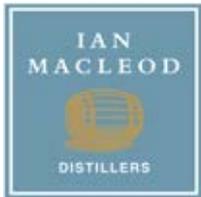


Ian Macleod Distillers Limited

Ian Macleod Builds a Powerful Brand Distillery With the Support of Epicor Tropos



A strong history of organic growth and acquisitions has transformed Ian Macleod from a minor whisky company to a large scale distiller, blender, bottler, distributor, seller, and marketer of whisky and gin. This rapid evolution needed the support of an enterprise software system that could provide a single source of truth throughout the entire company. Ian Macleod chose the Epicor Tropos enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, as it offered the control and visibility the company required to manage all operations in one system.

Company Facts

Overview

- ▶ Location—Broxburn, Scotland, United Kingdom
- ▶ Industry—Food and beverage
- ▶ Website—www.ianmacleod.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Control and visibility through integrated IT system
- ▶ Platform for future growth

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Tropos™

Benefits

- ▶ Integrated the complex production, supply, and sales operations through a single enterprise-wide solution
- ▶ Improved production and visibility across the enterprise
- ▶ Increased margin and cost control
- ▶ Better predicted demand through accurate forecasting tools

Top Independent Whisky Provider

Ian Macleod Distillers Limited is one of the largest and most reputable independent companies operating in the spirits industry. Established in 1933 as a small whisky broker, the family-run firm has significantly expanded its range of top quality brands. Since 2003, the company has acquired Glengoyne, Tamdhu, Edinburgh Gin, and—most recently—Rosebank. In 2017, the company's annual turnover was £79 million.

As well as being a whisky producer, the firm owns a 50-percent stake in bottling firm Broxburn Bottlers Limited. This joint venture—combined with the distilleries and warehouses—completes an end-to-end production capability that required a fully integrated ERP system.

Need for Tight Production Control

Mike Younger, finance director for Ian Macleod, was involved in the decision to replace their previous disparate systems. He commented, "Our software platform was 20 years old, and its limitations were clear. The bespoke system was designed with built-in assumptions that were being stretched beyond their original remit and capabilities."

Ian Macleod had evolved from serving the private label needs of single customers requiring single products to a branded business with many customers purchasing multiple products. This placed large demands on the old system.

The key problem was data accessibility—along with the inability to combine all the activities of Ian Macleod and Broxburn Bottlers. Younger explained, "Passing and collating the information from separate modules in the old system was an inaccurate and complicated process. The company needed overall transparency. The reports from each module were hard to manipulate and were not absolutely in step."

Younger believes the success of the project is due to the end-to-end implementation of Tropos. He noted, "We include the maturing of whisky, purchasing, manufacturing, and selling of finished goods entirely in Tropos. From the moment we take it off the still to the moment we get the pound in from the customer, it's all processed through Tropos."

Solution Tailored to the Whisky Trade

A key requirement when looking for a vendor was compatibility with the spirit industry. Epicor is an established provider of supply chain solutions to the food and drink sector, and Tropos delivers unique modules specifically designed for the whisky industry. For example, the Whisky Workbench module allows Ian Macleod to accurately track and monitor the complex area of its maturing stock of casks alongside the blending operations.

Younger explained, “Tropos is all-encompassing. It treats Ian Macleod and Broxburn Bottlers as one operational unit whilst successfully reporting the separate legal entities. Implementing the Whisky Workbench means that processing within the complex blending operations is always accurate. It’s impressive how it fits into our complex business and operational structure.”

Younger highlights the deep capabilities of Tropos as it deals with the “trickier” aspects of handling maturing whisky. Tropos caters for blending operations and the duty

state—bonded/duty paid—of items in a predictable and accurate manner. He commented, “The system handles maturation losses—the angels’ share—and blending losses without an associated cost reduction. In other systems where you have a quantity loss, you normally have a value loss.”

The deep integration between Tropos, Qlik-Sense, and CODA-XL has proved invaluable to Younger. He has configured reports and dashboards that provide insight into the Ian Macleod business, and he can easily compile an efficient, accurate, and comprehensive set of management accounts. These are all produced in Microsoft® Excel® using CODA’s Excel integration tool—CODA-XL. He added, “What you get is the truth, and what comes out of the system is the final result with very minimal intervention.”

The overall solution is robust, reliable, and adaptable and has enabled and supported Ian Macleod to grow into the powerful branded business it is today.

Growth as a Result—Not an Objective

The company has experienced exponential growth since the original Tropos implementation. A growth that—in

Younger’s opinion—is now a consequence of their actions and not the objective. He explained, “We have simply got better at what we are doing. If you do things right, your business grows. But our growth wouldn’t have happened if we had been struggling with data integrity. Tropos ensures that is never the case.”

Speaking about ERP systems, Younger recognizes the profound impact this can have on companies. “You can change your accountant in a week and your bank in a month. It can take years to change your ERP system. You have to know that when you take that next step, it is going to last. For us, it has been enduring.”

As the Ian Macleod brand continues to adapt and flourish in an ever-changing industry, Tropos is in the background—allowing the business to be constantly looking to the future.

“Since we implemented Tropos, it has delivered exactly what we expected of it. It is a steady, easy-to-use, and robust system which is now as accepted as the water coming out of the tap. There is no better product fit for our sector,” Younger concluded.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers’ unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.

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